



Even for the cooperative movement, the year 2020 was a very difficult year—perhaps the most difficult of all. One word cannot describe precisely how and what the year was. There is a particular phrase; 2020 was a year when everything had a very good start; but all these went to a standstill in a flash due to the scares or perils triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This pandemic, which caught both the Philippines and the rest of the world by shock and uncertainties, resulted in the implementation of lockdowns by the authorities, characterized by very strict social distancing measures, and limited physical movements. The drastic slowdowns in economic, as well as social activities were also described as something which were even worse than those global economic crises of the 80s, 90s, and 2000s combined.

But before the standstill, it was business as usual for the Philippine cooperative movement.

COOPERATIVE HERITAGE, ICA PRESIDENT VISIT, AND CONSULTATIVE FORUM



Things kicked off very, very well in January when on the 27th, cooperators throughout the country gathered at the North Wing Lobby of the House of Representatives in Quezon City to commemorate National Cooperatives Week. This ran up to the 30th. The commemoration, which also included a Trade Fair that showcased cooperative goods and services, also coincided with the 105 years of cooperative heritage in the country. During the opening day, the movement also joined forces through an act of goodwill: the donation to the victims of the Taal Volcano eruption which took place that



same month. Said donation was in the form of a cheque amounting to P200,000. The P100,000 came from the office of Cong. Ben Canama; and the other P100,000, from the proceeds of this year's event, which was donated to LCDOP (League of Cooperative Development Officers of the Philippines). This gesture also showed that the movement stands solid in unifying their strong sense of compassion by lending strong support to those affected by calamities.

February 6 was a highly significant day when cooperators gathered at the Samar Room of Sofitel Philippine Plaza where the International Cooperatives Alliance (ICA) President Ariel Guarco graced the *CO/OPS for 2030* forum and he presented what the future of the movement will be like, not only for this new decade but two decades from now. *CO/OPS 2030* also coincided with the United Nations' as well as ICA's sustainable development goals for the next two decades, during which confab a presentation was made on the Philippine cooperative scene, as well as its short-to-medium-term development plans. Dr. Guarco heartily expressed how he was so happy to be with Filipino cooperators, and how very timely it was for both Filipino and Argentine colleagues to share experiences and insights. A day before, the Argentine cooperator made a study tour of some leading Philippine entities, where he was warmly received by his colleagues and he graciously noted their contributions to the movement in helping uplift the Filipino well-being in more productive, yet holistic ways. While Dr. Guarco remained very upbeat on what the movement can do to help improve lives as well as uplift the well-being of the vast majority on this planet, he also warned of insensitive human behavior, which has generated ills such as mass migrations, the dilemma which is triggered by more nations rejecting those migrants, the creation of more virtual and physical barriers, and financial instability. Yet, he remained confident on how the movement and its members who are committed to adhering to sustainable development goals that also promote gender equality in decision-making, peace, and development can be effective game-changers.



On February 18 at the Manahan Hall of the PCC Headquarters Building, PCC hosted its Consultative Forum on RA 9520; moderated by PCC Chair Dr. Gary Leonardo. He emphasized the need for amending certain provisions that may have been outdated, as some of these have been overtaken by several developments taking place within the movement. Among the issues discussed that need further evaluation or amendments were:

- limiting the term of cooperative officers to six years, with a rest period of one year, so as to give others a chance and also setting an age limit to 70 years old;



- to have a cooperative bank act, which will work independently from regulations set by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and to exclusively suit the coop banking culture;
- to review the issue regarding the intention of putting up subsidiary cooperatives, which are to be owned by the mother coop;
- how the distribution of patronage refunds attributable to income from investments is to be clarified;
- the redefinition and reclassification of cooperatives, in the light of the proliferation of different types (agri-coops, vendors' coops, multipurpose cops, credit coops, etc.);
- the concerns on officers holding positions in more than one federation;
- the utilization of coop development funds;
- how disputes within coop entities can be settled vis-à-vis RA 9520 which allows coops to do so internally among themselves in contrast to what was being discussed in RA 11364 which allows the CDA to intervene; and
- cooperative desks in all offices of Local Government Units nationwide.

The PCC Officers and Board of Directors also paid a courtesy call to General Eduardo M. Año (Ret.) Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) where they were graciously welcomed by the Honorable Secretary. Following the presentation of PCC and its role in unifying the movement, Sec. Año emphasized how cooperatives can vigorously help in peace and development, especially with marginalized sectors like women and indigenous people. He also stressed DILG's program which includes MC 116-2019 to which PCC CEO Bustillos added how the partnership can be carried out. The DILG Secretary also reiterated his support for the proposal of putting Cooperative Development Officers (CDOs) in LGUs that will enhance the movement's lofty ideals and advocacies more effectively at the local/grassroots level.

RESILIENCY, ACTIVITY, AND COMPASSION EVEN AMIDST THE LOCKDOWN

With what seemed to be a very healthy, proactive, and vigorous start for this year, everything went to a standstill with the implementation of very strict social and physical distancing and restrictive mobility measures triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic; and this both stunned and shocked the cooperative movement, prompting it to even cancel this year's much-awaited 15th National Cooperative Summit in Iloilo City and to move it to a much later date when restrictions would have been eased.

It was also this grave crisis that set a precise frame of mind for the movement to put into function the 7th Principle of the Cooperatives – *Concern for the Community*.



The list of cooperatives providing different kinds of relief work, goods, and services will continue to grow, to ease the burden of its members, the communities they serve, our frontliners in the health/med and defense sectors, and the different LGUs. The more they mobilize their resources through concerted efforts, the more they epitomize that they have the necessary forces when the call heeds them to perform tasks (or more precisely, multi-tasks) for their members, frontliners, and the communities they serve; like what Senator Bong Go's *"Call to Cooperatives: Help Communities Respond to Covid-19"* triggered.

Following the issuance of a memorandum by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), cooperatives further mobilized their resources to assist the LGUs and the government in providing help to the front liners, health workers, and the poor citizens in the battle against COVID-19 pandemic, posthaste the co-ops across the country heeded the call. The memorandum also coincided with a growing clamor among various cooperatives for CDA to allow cooperatives to give 'dividends' to the coop members. True to its mandate, CDA issued the order on March 26, 2020. CDA even expanded the essence of the Memo that goes beyond the distribution of Interest on Share Capital and Patronage Refund (ISCPR) at the height of the present predicament that we are experiencing. It called upon the co-ops *"to use their Community Development Fund (CDF) to reinforce prevention and control actions of the government such as buying food packs, vitamins, alcohol, soap, and other necessities and distribute those to communities that are in dire need of help."*

Even before the release of the said memorandum, PCC member coops in different parts of the country had already started performing their noble deeds like distributing food packs, PPEs (personal protection equipment), and other essentials to the front liners/health workers—in addition to goods and hygienic requisites to their members plus the different communities where these are located.

In addition to their relief work that also included the distribution of specialty goods made by their own entities, PCC members pooled their resources together to make donations to some of the country's leading hospitals as well as health centers in various provincial cities. Coop entities that were behind this noble undertaking are ***Cooperative Health Management Federation (CHMF), 1Cooperative Insurance System of the Philippines Life and General Insurance (1CISP), First Community Cooperative (FICCO), Metro South Cooperative Bank (MSCB), Novaliches Development Cooperative (NOVADECI), san Dionisio Credit Cooperative (SDCC) and Tagalog Cooperative Development Centre (TAGCODEC); all in partnership with Philippine Cooperative Centre (PCC).*** The following hospital-recipients who benefitted from this joint undertaking are:

- *Skyline Hospital and Medical Centre:* 200 pcs coveralls, 200 pcs. face masks, 50 pcs. face shields, 100 pcs. foot covers, 200 pcs. gloves, 50 pcs. goggles, 100 pcs. head caps, 100 pcs N99 masks;
- *Philippine Heart Centre:* 200 pcs coveralls; 200 pcs. face masks, 50 pcs. face shields, 100 pcs. foot covers, 200 pcs. gloves, 50 pcs. goggles, 100 pcs. head caps, 100 pcs. N99 masks,
- *Bulacan Medical Mission Group Cooperative Hospital:* 200 pcs coveralls, 200 pcs. face masks, 50 pcs. face shields, 100 pcs. foot covers, 200 pcs. gloves, 50 pcs. goggles, 100 pcs. head caps, 100 pcs N99 masks;
- *East Avenue Medical Centre:* 200 pcs coveralls, 200 pcs. face masks, 50 pcs. face shields, 100 pcs. foot covers, 200 pcs. gloves, 50 pcs. goggles, 100 pcs. head caps, 100 pcs N99 masks;



- *Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Centre*: two bottles of alcohol, 100 pcs. coveralls, 200 pcs. face masks, 50 pcs. face shields, 100 pcs. foot covers, 200 pcs. gloves, 50 pcs. goggles, 100 pcs. head caps, 100 pcs. N99 masks;
- *Ospital ng Paranaque*: 200 pcs. coveralls, 50 pcs. face shields, 100 pcs. foot covers, 200 pcs. gloves, 50 pcs. goggles, 100 pcs. head caps, 100 pcs. N99 masks;
- *Lung Centre of the Philippines*: 200 pcs coveralls, 50 pcs face shields, 50 pcs goggles, 100 pcs N99 masks, 200 pcs face masks, 200 pcs gloves, 100 pcs head caps, 100 pcs foot covers;
- *Medical Mission Group Cooperative Hospital Lucena*: 200 pcs coveralls, 50 pcs goggles, 100 pcs N99 masks. 200 pcs gloves, 100 pcs head caps, 100 pcs foot covers;
- *Manila Doctors' Hospital*: 200 pcs. coveralls, 50 pcs. goggles, 100 pcs. N99 masks;
- *Medical Mission Group Cooperative Hospital Pasig*: 200 pcs. coveralls, 50 pcs goggles, 50 pcs face shields, 100 pcs N99 masks, 200 pcs gloves, 100 pcs head caps, 100 pcs. foot covers;
- *Perpetual Help Medical Centre Las Pinas*: 200 pcs. coveralls, 50 pcs face shields, 50 goggles, 100 pcs N99 masks, 5 bottles of alcohol;
- *Philippine General Hospital /UP-PGH*: 200 pcs coveralls, 50 pcs face shields, 50 pcs goggles, 100 pcs N99 masks, 200 pcs face masks, 200 pcs gloves, 100 pcs head caps, 100 pcs foot covers
- *Veterans Memorial Medical Centre*: 200 pcs. coveralls, 40 pcs face shields, 50 pcs goggles, 100 pcs, N99 masks, 200 pcs face masks, 200 pcs gloves, 100 pcs head caps, 100 pcs foot covers
- *UST Medical Centre*: 100 pcs. coveralls, 50 pcs goggles, 50 pcs. N99 masks, 200 pcs face masks, 200 pcs. gloves, 100 pcs head caps, 100 pcs. foot covers;
- *Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital*: 100 pcs coveralls, 50 pcs face shields, 50 pcs goggles, 100 pcs N99 masks, 200 pcs face masks, 100 pcs. head caps;
- *San Lazaro Hospital*: 100 coveralls, 50 face shields, 50 pcs goggles, 100 pcs N99 masks, 100 pcs face masks, 200 pcs gloves, 100 pcs head caps, 2 bottles alcohol;
- *Pinyahan Health Centre*: 100 pcs face masks, 100 pcs gloves.



The forms of aid did not stop there. Some PCC member-entities did spraying/sanitation activities in the barangays that they served, while other coops diverted their manufacturing activities towards the production, distribution, and selling of face masks and face shields and making and donating protective suits for frontliners. Transport coops, on the other hand, also did their share of “ayuda” by providing free transportation for frontliners and also in the delivery of relief goods while strictly adhering to social distancing protocols on the road.



As part of its concerted efforts with other cooperative entities to help communities combat the after-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, PCC conducted food relief operations last May 15. Under this program, PCC helped farmer coops sell their produce, particularly overstocked items which, in turn, were resold and redistributed to marginalized cooperative communities in NCR and nearby provinces. Partnering with the PCC in this noble undertaking were: *1CISP/1Cooperative Insurance System of the Philippines Life and General Insurance*; *CLIMBS Life and General Insurance Cooperative*; *NOVADECI/Novaliches Development Cooperative*; *San Dionisio Credit Cooperative*; *Barangka Credit Cooperative*; *MSCB/Metro South Development Bank*; *MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Centre*; *BDMPC/Bohol Diocesan Multipurpose Cooperative*; and the *Union of Catholic Church-Based Cooperatives*. The relief goods contained rice and various vegetables such as carrots, potato, sayote, radish, and cabbage, which was purchased through an arrangement with farmers and LGUs to help the farmers of La Trinidad, Benguet sell their vegetables to be able to earn during the quarantine. Among the beneficiaries were:

- the *Tondo Foreshore Market Vendors Development Cooperative (TOMVEDCO)* which repacked and distributed the goods to 2,000 families displaced by fire in Tondo, Manila;
- *LEARN Network Multipurpose Cooperative*, where members also received goods for the 164 Families of the said cooperative; and
- *Kooperatiba ng mga Manggagawa sa Caloocan (KMC)*, which also received the relief packs for the 101 Families of the affected employees due to the lockdown triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.



In the same light, PCC also organized a relief operation for the indigenous people (IPs) of Zambales on April 22; this was also in response to the call of Asec Virgilio 'Boy' Lazaga to help IPs in Zambales. The relief operation was made possible through the donations of the following cooperatives, Novaliches Development Cooperative (NOVADECI), San Dionisio Credit Cooperative (SDCC), Barangka Credit Cooperative (BCC) in partnership with the Philippine Cooperative Center (PCC) National Cooperative Marketing Foundation (NCMF) and KOOP KING.



The first beneficiaries of relief operations were from the town of San Felipe. The Relief goods were received and repacked by the National Commission of Indigenous People (NCIP) in coordination with the National Anti-Poverty Commission IPs Sectoral Representative Judith Maranes. The goods were distributed to ten (10) barangays namely: Cabaruan, Sagpat, Yangil, Banawen, Bantay Carmen, Tektek, Anangka, Lalec, Balincaguing, and Cabuya. The second group of beneficiaries was headed by Mr. Salvador Dumain (Ka Badong) the chieftain of Maporac Ayta Organization. They also received and repacked the goods for Sitio Maporac and Barangay New San Juan, Cabangon, Zambales. The last group of beneficiaries was Pinatubo Ayta Agro-Industrial Multi-purpose Cooperative headed by Mr. Chito Balintay. They distributed the relief items to the following barangays: Villar, Moraza, Belbel, and Bagong Silang, Castillejos.

TELECONFERENCING AS THE NEW NORM—AND TWG CLUSTERS ZOOMS

With domestic and foreign travel banned due to very strict social distancing measures, the last several months also saw PCC participate in several teleconferences via Webinar, Zoom, and other platforms which linked the cooperative movement both locally and globally. These included:

May 13, 2020 - the Webinar Forum, *Post Covid-19 Response of Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific* initiated and sponsored by the International Cooperative Alliance/Asia-Pacific (ICAAP), which saw the participation of PCC, via its Chairman, Dr. Garibaldi O. Leonardo vis-à-vis ICA Global, headed by its President Ariel Guarco; ICA-Regional Asia-Pacific with Regional Director, Dr. Balu Iyer; plus cooperative leaders from Australia, Vietnam, China, India, Iran, and Indonesia, where cooperators from these countries discussed as well as presented their own movements' various COVID-19 prevention responses/activities/solutions/relief work and how such actions have underscored the invaluable role of the movement in helping their governments, as well as the private sector, effectively combat this pandemic;



May 4, 2020 - another Webinar teleconference, ***PH Coops, Resiliency In The New Normal***, which was presented by PCC in partnership with RCBC, one of the country's leading commercial banks and financial institutions, as well as coop entities 1CISP, COOP-NATCCO Network, and MASS-SPECC, discussed how digitalization and IT refinements can benefit coops as they make the transition into the 'new normal.' The presenters were Lito Villanueva, EVP/Chief Innovation and Inclusion Officer of RCBC and Chairman of FintechAlliance.ph and RCBC Chief Economist Michael Ricafort. Reactors from the coop movement were 1Coop President and CEO Roy Miclat, NATCCO CEO Sylvia 'Ibing' Paraguya, and Ann Cuisia, Founder and CEO of Traxion Tech, Inc.

July 20, 2020 the virtual forum, ***Promoting Industrialization And Full Employment-Based On Sound Agricultural Development And Agrarian Reform: Role Of Cooperatives In The Program*** which was facilitated by PCC CEO Edwin Bustillos, and resource speakers Gadwin Handumon, Managing Director of Paglaum Coop and Former Sectoral Representative of National Anti-Poverty Commission- Cooperative Sector Council (NAPC-CSC); PCC Chairperson Dr. Gary Leonardo; Loreto Ramiro of KABISIG Coop PCC Vice-Chairperson; Fr. Anton CT Pascual of Caritas Manila; 1CISP's BGen.Ted Evangelista; Coop stalwart, Chair of Utilities Cluster and Congressman Pons Payuyo; and Ms. Christie Rowena 'Teta'y' Plantilla, CEO, Federation of Peoples' Sustainable Development Cooperative (FPSDC). This forum was held in the light of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-Asa program initiated by the government that was meant to decongest urban areas and to promote the vast economic potentials that the countryside offers. In addition to helping boost agricultural productivity to enhance food security in the light of the pandemic, the forum also instilled the importance of value chain, diversification of agricultural activities, and the need to strategize further as that means creating more opportunities in countryside development economics.

With the use of Zoom, PCC hosted several TWG as well as cluster meetings between July and December which were designed to help position PCC as the National Alliance while, at the same time, reinforcing its image as programs-oriented and proactive instead of being structural. At the same time,



the distinct and individual programs mapped out by the six different clusters--education and advocacy, agriculture, finance, marketing, utilities, and human services, which were based on free-for-all discussions and insights from representatives of the different clusters as well as cooperators who joined in these sessions—were also aimed at enhancing what each of these clusters can do to combat the after-effects of COVID-19; to boost their activities in a more systematic, streamlined manner via the adoption of digitalization, data gathering, and other IT enhancements; to encourage mergers/integration between the bigger, more successful entities with the smaller ones in dire need of resuscitation; to instill more best practices and value-chain processes; and, to strengthen the movement as conduits in government programs.

There are also advocacies where PCC has taken the lead or at the very least has actively participated, giving rise to the creation, for instance, of the TWG of BIR both at the National and Regional Levels to address the tax issues of the cooperative sector. Eventually, PCC and other cooperatives crafted a position paper on key issues relating to tax treatment on cooperatives. PCC and other cooperatives that are affiliated with the Coop NATCCO Party List asserted Article 60 and 61 of RA 9520 on tax exemptions of cooperatives when dealing with their members and non-members. This led to the issuance of BIR Commissioner Ceasar Dulay Revenue Memorandum Circular 124-2020 Clarifying Certain Provisions of Revenue Memorandum Order No. 76-2010 in Relation to the Joint Rules and Regulations Implementing Articles 60, 61 and '144 of Republic Act No. 9520, otherwise Known as the " Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008" and other Related Revenue Issuances. The released of RMC 124, s. of 2020 is a victory for the cooperative sector in their continuing assertion of the law and their tax privileges under RA 9520.

Meanwhile on another angle, the series of zoom meetings have clarified the fine line between unions and federations and became more defined, with unions tasked to handle education and advocacy and the federations, business, finance, and marketing—yet the two will work very closely with each other. With PCC’s program-oriented nature now recognized and accepted among its members, it is also PCC’s fervent wish for the CDA to recognize PCC as the **‘National Alliance’ that unites coop leadership, integrates coop activities, and consolidates coop resources.**

ACTIVE AND VIGOROUS PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL COOP MONTH

National Cooperatives Month 2020 took place the whole month of October with a series of online symposia and seminars. It was also during this year when October was finally declared as National Cooperatives Month by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. As usual, PCC also extended it's very active and vigorous participation and support in this year’s events.

Among the major online conferences were *Cooperative Month At The Senate* last October 5 which saw the enthusiastic participation of bigwigs from the DTI/Department of Trade and Industry, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) side by side with stalwarts from the movement;

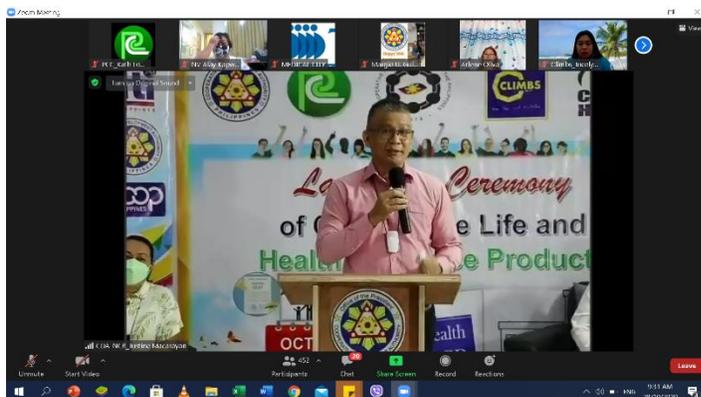




The *October 8 Zoom Forum* where Secretaries Joselito Bautista of the DSWD/Department of Social Welfare and Development, Presidential Communications Operations Office's (PCOO's) Martin Andanar and Cabinet Secretary Carlo Nograles graciously acknowledged their partnerships between their agencies and the movement; and

On October 22 *An Afternoon with the President*, Rodrigo Roa Duterte. The President's brief, direct yet very confident statements clearly echoed how he esteems the movement as true harbingers of social change while at the same time helping raise the well-being of millions of Filipinos out of poverty and instilling among them the concepts of self-help and cooperation with others that best speak of the essence of what the movement is all about. Also during that afternoon, the movement donated a cheque that will help fund and support the government's *Donasyon Mo, Vaccine Ko* Fund Drive. The cheque, worth P5,104,000 (P5.1 million) to the IATF/Inter-Agency Task Force which spearheads the abovementioned fund drive is also another manifestation that the movement is an effective conduit and invaluable partner in government programs.

More aces up for the movement as a conduit in government programs—also in line with the cooperative principle of service to communities—took place when PCC was awarded a *Certificate of Recognition by the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples* (NCIP) during its 23rd National IP Thanksgiving Day which was held online via Zoom. The certification was in recognition of PCC as one of its partners via its 'cooperativism with compassion' program wherein PCC—working jointly with the different coop entities—provided relief operations to 1,779 Aeta families at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Considered to be a major milestone for both this year's National Coop Month and the movement as a whole was the launching of three cooperative health and insurance packages the morning of October 28 at the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) headquarters office in Cubao, Quezon City. A joint undertaking between three wholly coop-owned health and insurance providers: CLIMBS, 1CISP, and CHMF, the launching of these packages enable cooperators from the different entities throughout the country to enjoy and benefit from reasonably-priced, extensive as well as flexible health and insurance packages that best suit the needs of the plan holders as well as their loved ones. In addition to the flexible and affordable products launched by the three providers that offer, among others extended benefits to cooperators who are senior citizens (via 1CISP's *YES/Youth and Elderly Shield* program and *CLIMBS Plus*) whose age coverage extends to 99 years, it was also announced during that day of CHMF as the beneficiary of a grant of 250,000 Euros in partnership with a German firm, GI-Zet, to develop its Telehealth service. This enhancement as of press time has received applications of between 15,000 to 30,000 members.

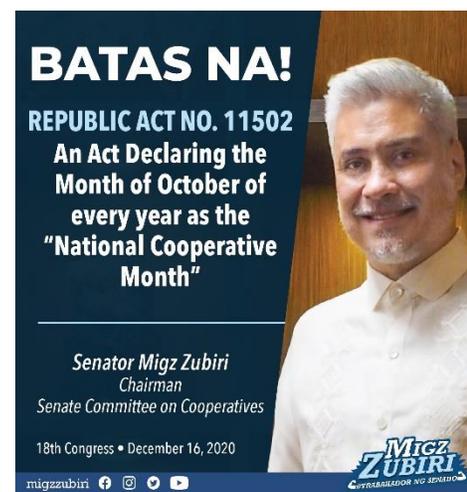
A very fitting finale to this year's National Cooperative Month took place last November 9 when the Senate finally approved on its third and final reading Senate Bill No. 1855, which authorizes the



creation of a Cooperative Development Officer (CDO) as a mandatory position in all local government units. The Bill, which was sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri—himself a staunch supporter of cooperatives and who passionately champions the movement’s advocacies—and principal sponsor of this Bill, will implement putting dedicated CDOs who will take charge of assisting promising groups and sectors in organizing and forming their own cooperatives. These full-fledged CDOs may be appointed by the LGUs or they may merge the responsibilities of a CDO with an existing position, should this prove to be feasible vis-à-vis the size of a local cooperative sector, or the capability of the local government to carve out its proper budget.

Not to be outdone, the approval of Bill No. 1855 was also another triumph for PCC where, thanks to its several meetings with representatives from the coop movement within PCC and at the Executive and legislative levels—coupled with its advocacy for such positions to take place over the past few years alone, this major milestone for the movement will truly usher in a new dawn for cooperativism at the local/grassroots level.

Before the year ends, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on December 16, 2020, signed into law Republic Act 11502 or the Act Declaring the month of October of every year as the "National Cooperative Month". The said law promotes the principles and values of cooperatives and encourages cooperative movement to continue living these out. This law is a milestone in the history of the cooperative movement. As per Senator Zubiri- It is a recognition of the cooperatives' roles in lifting many of our countrymen out of poverty, building strong communities, promoting justice, and growing our livelihoods - it's undeniable that the Cooperatives have made a huge contribution to our country.



It is very difficult to predict what the year 2021 will be like, what with the continuing social distancing measures being imposed by governments both here and abroad to help prevent a second wave of COVID-19 incidents. Yet amidst the scenario when much of the world went to a standstill, the cooperative movement—along with the strong support and confidence that PCC showed—has proven the very strong sense of determination and resiliency that it possesses, be it on an individual member, union, or federation level.

Not to be outdone, the crisis triggered by the pandemic translated into opportunities for the stakeholders of the movement to get themselves together and show their invaluable deeds of providing aid to those in need within and outside their circles, in line with the cooperative principle of concern for the community and the less fortunate. Despite uncertainties, PCC was also there to provide both encouragement and support for its members as ‘soldiers of compassion’ which has earned more esteem even from the mainstream sector of society.

It is also everybody’s fervent wish that this crisis will not last forever. True, there were painful lessons learned on how to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, as there was no textbook solution on how to combat it instantly. But given the flurry of activities and achievements that the coop movement, with



the strong support of PCC, had shown, and by being hands-on in their approach to tackle the pandemic, it is the readiness that the movement was able to demonstrate, and came up with workable solutions and strategies that have propelled it to make that transition into the new normal.

And while people still have that sense of culture shock in adapting to the new normal, let us all hope that the cooperative mindset of positive thinking, looking for pragmatic solutions then applying these, and keeping the lines of communications open even amidst those intermittent signals show that simple matters count a lot in getting things going. And the more that day comes which we may call the 'renewed normal' when social distancing measures have drastically been reduced and movements are back to normal, yet of which people are much more cautious than before—expect the coop movement to accept, and face up to any new challenges with readiness and enthusiasm.